

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

United States Department of Agriculture

FOR MAY 25, PAPERS :

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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4345-So.

DESCRIBES STATE-AID PROGRAM FOR WILDLIFE

Described as one of the most beneficial measures adopted in recent years for wildlife conservation, the Pittman-Robertson Act, known also as the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act, is explained by Albert M. Day of the U. S. Biological Survey in a publication just issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The measure was approved by President Roosevelt on September 2, 1937, and the program was begun July 1, 1938.

The theory behind the Act is that the Federal Government can contribute materially in a national wildlife restoration program, says Mr. Day. Under the program, the efforts of the States also can be more effectively correlated for restoring natural wildlife conditions, and for undertaking much-needed practical research

The existence of wildlife has been menaced by drought, floods, soil erosion, farming and industrial developments, and the diminishing supply of natural food and cover. Recognizing the fundamental principle that wildlife is inescapably linked with the land, the new act provides for the restoration of suitable environment in which wild birds and mammals may live and multiply. Heretofore the States have been unable to cope with the situation, the author says.

The pamphlet refers to the large sums spent by hunters and sportsmen throughout the country and points out that others who do not hunt find esthetic value in an abundance of wild mammals and birds. More than 6,500,000 hunters purchase licenses from the States, and pay fees of approximately \$12,000,000 a year for hunting privileges.

Federal revenue for the program does not come from the fees to the States, however. It is made available from a 10-percent Federal excise tax on firearms, shells, and cartridges, approximately \$2,750,000 annually.

Under the Act, Day states, the Federal Government may pay 75 percent of the cost of the work performed on approved projects concerned with land acquisition, restoration of natural environment, and research. State laws providing for general cooperation with Federal agencies are not adequate to meet the requirements, so each State must specifically assent to the Act. In order to qualify for Federal aid States must also have passed wildlife-conservation laws that prohibit the use of hunting-license fees for any purpose except administration of their fish and game departments.

Types of projects suitable for the Federal aid program under the Pittman-Robertson Act are those whose purpose is land-purchase, land-development, and research. Further, Day says, maintenance of projects is specified by the act to be the duty of the States according to their respective laws.

"The Wildlife Restoration Program Under the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937", Miscellaneous Publication No. 350, may be obtained at 5 cents a copy from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.